



## SOUTHERN PARTNERS

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) covers Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. It consists of bilateral policies between the EU and the 10 individual partner countries, plus a regional cooperation framework, the Union for the Mediterranean. The EU boosted support for democratic transformation under the ENP in 2011, in response to the uprisings in its southern neighbourhood. It further reviewed the ENP in 2015.

### LEGAL BASIS

- Article 8 of the Treaty on European Union;
- Title V of the Treaty on European Union: the EU's 'external action';
- Articles 206-207 (trade) and 216-219 (international agreements) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

### INSTRUMENTS

Association agreements provide the legal basis for the EU's bilateral relations with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Tunisia. The association agreement initialled with Syria before the Syrian Government's violent crackdown on public protests in 2011 was never signed. The negotiations for an EU-Libya framework agreement were suspended in February 2011 and have yet to be resumed.

In the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU and its southern partners (except Libya and Syria) have adopted bilateral action plans, partnership priorities or association agendas. These establish agendas for political and economic reform with short- and medium-term priorities of between three and five years. Reflecting the needs, interests and capacities of the EU and each partner, ENP action plans are aimed, in particular, at developing democratic, socially equitable and inclusive societies, promoting economic integration and education, developing small and medium-sized enterprises and agriculture, and facilitating the movement of people across borders.

These plans are mostly funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and other thematic instruments. Support is also provided through loans by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The EU is also seeking to advance market access and cooperation on migration and mobility issues with its southern partners. Negotiations on Deep and Comprehensive Free



Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) are in progress with Morocco and with Tunisia. Mobility partnerships have been concluded with Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan and negotiations are ongoing with Lebanon. A number of projects are being implemented within these frameworks, in particular under the [Mobility Partnership Facility](#), launched in 2016. In addition, regional and bilateral initiatives on migration and mobility are being funded under the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#), the North Africa window, in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The [EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#), the ‘Madad Fund’, provides support to Syrian refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and local communities in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), launched in 2008 to revive the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, provides a regional framework for cooperation between the EU Member States and 15 Mediterranean countries, including the 10 southern partners.

## CURRENT STATUS

### A. Algeria

As a major regional player and an important energy producer, Algeria is a key EU partner in the southern neighbourhood. An association agreement entered into force in 2005. The EU and Algeria adopted their shared [Partnership Priorities](#) at the Association Council of March 2017. The partnership priorities set up a renewed framework for political engagement and enhanced cooperation, with a focus on: (i) governance and fundamental rights; (ii) socio-economic development and trade; (iii) energy, environment and climate change; (iv) strategic and security dialogue; and (v) the human dimension, migration and mobility.

### B. Egypt

Relations between the European Union and Egypt are governed by an association agreement, in force since 2004. In the context of the revised ENP, a set of EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities were adopted by the EU-Egypt Association Council in July 2017. While all elements of the association agreement remain in effect, the [Partnership Priorities](#) — defined jointly by the EU and Egypt — substitute the action plan, and will guide the partnership for the 2017-2020 period. The focus during this period will be on: (i) economic modernisation, energy sustainability and the environment; (ii) social development and social protection; and (iii) governance, enhancing stability and the modern democratic state.

### C. Israel

EU-Israel relations are extensive, underpinned by strong economic and trade relations and technical cooperation. Based on the 2000 association agreement, the relationship developed dynamically in subsequent years, with a substantial expansion across many sectors. The EU-Israel action plan, agreed in 2005, is based on shared common values of democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and basic freedoms, and promotes the integration of Israel into European policies and programmes. In 2009, the EU decided that, in order for relations to be upgraded to ‘advanced’ status, there would have to be progress in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). Cooperation continues, however, on the basis of the [2005 ENP action plan](#), which has been extended until 2020.



#### D. Jordan

The EU considers Jordan an important partner that plays a stabilising role in the Middle East. The EU-Jordan association agreement, in force since May 2002, provides the legal basis for this bilateral relationship. An ENP action plan was adopted in 2012 and new [EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities](#) as well as a Compact were agreed in December 2016. Within the ENP, Jordan is the first Mediterranean partner country with which the EU has concluded technical negotiations leading to an 'Advanced Status'. In October 2014, the EU and Jordan launched a Mobility Partnership. Jordan has been granted two macro-financial assistance (MFA) packages (one in 2013 worth EUR 180 million and one in December 2016 worth EUR 200 million). Jordan, which hosts over 655 000 Syrian refugees, is a recipient of the 'Madad Fund', the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis. In the context of EU support for Jordan in the Syrian refugee crisis, in 2016 the EU and Jordan modified the association agreement in order to [relax the rules of origin](#) that apply to Jordanian exporters in their trade with the EU.

#### E. Lebanon

Relations are based on the EU-Lebanon association agreement, in force since 2006, and the [EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities](#) and Compact, agreed on in November 2016. The EU-Lebanon Association Council, held in July 2017, agreed to pursue discussions with a view to the signature of a Mobility Partnership. The EU supports Lebanon's unity, stability, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, particularly given the deteriorating situation in neighbouring Syria. A country of 4.4 million inhabitants, Lebanon currently hosts around 1 million registered Syrian refugees. Lebanon is a recipient of the 'Madad Fund'.

#### F. Libya

Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, Libya has been sliding into civil war, against the background of complex political, territorial, social and tribal divisions. Libya is also known as a Sahelian transit route for human trafficking and contraband. In this context, the EU is seeking to assist Libyans in establishing a stable and inclusive state. The EU supports the UN mediation efforts to bring an end to hostilities, and makes diplomatic approaches to Libyan and regional stakeholders. Libya does not have an associate agreement or other contractual agreement with the EU, but the country is eligible for funding under the ENI. Since 2016, the EU Emergency [Trust Fund for Africa has allocated almost EUR 135 million for protection of migrants in Libya](#).

#### G. Morocco

Of the southern partners, Morocco has one of the most developed relationships with the EU. An association agreement has been in force since 2000 and a new ENP action plan was adopted in 2013. The country was granted ENP 'advanced status' in 2008, reflecting the ambition to strengthen EU-Morocco cooperation and to further support economic and political reforms. The EU-Morocco mobility partnership was launched in June 2013. Negotiations on [visa facilitation and readmission](#) agreements and a DCFTA are ongoing. In addition, a renewed fisheries agreement entered into force in 2014. According to two recent rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union, the EU



could implement its agreements with Morocco, but these agreements do not apply to Western Sahara.

## H. Palestine

The EU is the leading financial supporter of the Palestinian Authority (PA), with an indicative annual bilateral allocation of around EUR 300 million. The overall objective of EU support is to help build the capacities of a future viable, independent and democratic Palestinian state, coexisting in peace and security with Israel and other neighbours. The legal basis for the EU's relations with the PA is the [Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation](#) concluded in 1997. The EU and the PA have signed an ENP action plan, which entered into force in 2013. That same year, the EU offered Israel and the future state of Palestine 'Special Privileged Partnerships' providing an unprecedented package of political, economic and security support to both parties in the context of a future final status agreement.

## I. Syria

After the Syrian Government began to violently repress anti-government protests in March 2011, the EU took a number of increasingly restrictive measures against the Syrian regime. All bilateral cooperation programmes between the EU and the Syrian Government have been suspended. The EU supports inclusive peace talks towards a Syrian-led political transition. The EU is the leading donor in the response to the Syrian crisis, and the EU and its Member States [have collectively provided](#) more than EUR 16.9 billion for humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance. The [Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis](#) manages most of the non-humanitarian aid given to neighbouring countries accommodating Syrian refugees. To date, the fund has reached a global volume of EUR 1.7 billion. The Council adopted the [EU Strategy on Syria](#) on 3 April 2017. In line with this strategy, the EU has hosted three conferences in support of the future of Syria and the region: the first in April 2017, during which the international community [pledged](#) EUR 5.6 billion in 'funding to support humanitarian, resilience and development activities in 2017 for the Syria crisis response'; the second in April 2018, during which participants [pledged](#) EUR 3.5 billion for 2018, and a further EUR 2.7 billion for 2019-2020; and the third on 12-14 March 2019, with [pledges](#) amounting to EUR 6.2 billion for 2019, and multi-year pledges of close to EUR 2.1 billion for 2020 and beyond. The humanitarian needs continue to be extremely acute. Over 11 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance, and there are more than 5.6 million Syrian refugees outside the country.

## J. Tunisia

Since the 2011 Tunisian revolution, the EU has provided political, financial and technical support for the country's democratic transition. The legal basis of the bilateral relationship remains the association agreement, which has been in force since 1998. In 2012, taking account of the progress achieved, the EU and Tunisia agreed to establish a 'privileged partnership' with a detailed [action plan](#) for 2013-2017. In July 2018, the EU-Tunisia Association Council adopted the main guiding lines for the [EU-Tunisia Privileged Partnership for the period 2018-2020](#). Tunisia and the EU launched a mobility partnership in March 2014 which led to the opening of negotiations on [visa facilitation and readmission agreements](#). [Negotiations on a DCFTA](#) were



approved in October 2015 and are ongoing. Between 2011 and 2016, EU assistance to Tunisia amounted to EUR 2 billion (EUR 1.2 billion in grants and EUR 800 million in macro-financial assistance). The EU has made a commitment to increase its annual financial assistance in the form of grants to EUR 300 million in 2017 and to maintain a sustained level of financing for the period until 2020. The consensual adoption of a new constitution in Tunisia in January 2014 and the successful organisation of parliamentary and presidential elections in October-December 2014, followed by long-awaited municipal elections in May 2018, were a major step forward in the country's democratic transition.

## **ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Parliament is fully involved in the European Neighbourhood Policy. Through its Committee on Foreign Affairs, it monitors the implementation of the ENP, in particular with regard to ENP annual progress reports and ENP reviews. The committee follows the political situation in partner countries through regular exchanges of views with high-level government officials, experts and civil society stakeholders. Budgetary powers give Parliament a direct influence on the amounts allocated to the European Neighbourhood Instrument. Parliament's consent has been required for the conclusion of all association agreements with southern ENP partners. Parliament must also consent to any new trade agreement, including future DCFTAs with Morocco and Tunisia.

Regular bilateral relations with the parliaments of southern partner countries are maintained through [standing delegations](#). Relations with the Moroccan parliament were thus upgraded with the creation of a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) in 2010. JPCs were further established with Tunisia in 2016 and with Algeria in 2018. Parliamentary relations with Syria are suspended due to the civil war, and the current context in Libya is also preventing interparliamentary relations. At regional level, Parliament participates in the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, which holds one plenary session and several committee meetings per year. The last plenary meeting took place in [Strasbourg on 13 and 14 February 2019](#), where Parliament handed over the presidency to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Parliament has taken part in several EU Election Observation Missions in southern partner countries, most recently in Lebanon (general elections) and in Tunisia (municipal elections); Parliament also provides assistance to Morocco and Tunisia, two priority countries under its democracy support programme.

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